



File Code: 1500

Date: July 12, 2006

Route To:

Subject: Leadership Transition Process

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and WO Staff Directors

Today, communities of place, local governments and other groups are increasingly convening and facilitating collaborative efforts that directly involve our Agency. I believe this increasing trend is the future of conservation, and its success depends on building partnerships for community-based stewardship of our natural resources. In fostering a spirit of collaborative, community-based stewardship we will help ensure the sustainable delivery of goods and services to the American people.

As we move forward in this new relationship with the people we serve, I recognize the need for improved transitions between outgoing leaders and those incoming leaders who will assume the responsibility for working directly with these partners and publics. A smooth transition between current Agency leadership, the groups they have been working with, and the leadership with whom these groups will soon rely on, is especially important. Our ability to solve natural resource related problems over the long run depends on the quality of long-term relationships between agencies, other organizations and the public.

Often, collaborative work is a combination of formal and informal working agreements and commitments between various participants. To help communicate these agreements, the Collaboration Action Team, a national-level group of governmental and non-governmental organizations, recommended to the National Leadership Team (NLT) that a "Handover Memo" be created. The NLT is supportive of the group's recommendation and I have asked the National Partnership Office (NPO) to develop steps to implement it across the Agency. The "Handover Memo" is designed to contain information about relationships with partners, collaborative efforts underway, commitments that have been made, and any work agreements or procedures that partners are using with the agency/unit. The "Handover Memo" is completed by the outgoing leader prior to their departure and addressed to the incoming leader. It is also copied to the outgoing leader's supervisor and key subordinate staff on the unit.

To begin implementation, staff from the NPO will be contacting Regions, Stations, and the Northeastern Area to identify key leadership positions for using a "Handover Memo." Key leadership positions are likely to include Forest Supervisors, District Rangers, Research Program Leaders, and State and Private Forestry field representatives. In addition, there may be Staff Directors at national and regional levels who work extensively with partner and cooperator networks who should be included.

Once key leadership positions and one or two leaders in transition are identified, the NPO staff will work directly with these individuals to develop a locally appropriate transition process,



including a “Handover Memo.” Finally, using the experience gained by the participants, guidance will be prepared in the Directives System using several of the best “Handover Memos” as examples.

A “Handover Memo” template is enclosed for your reference. To assist and monitor implementation, NPO staff is available to work directly with participants over the next several months. Again, the “Handover Memo” is intended to focus on establishing and maintaining community relationships associated with ongoing partnerships and collaborative work. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list of activities and/or projects.

Our ability to solve natural resource related problems over the long run depends on the quality of our long-term relationships. I join our partners in support of this important tool for ensuring improved transitions between our outgoing and incoming leaders and the communities they serve. If you have additional questions, please contact Debra Whitall at the NPO at 202-205-0967 or dwhitall@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Dale N. Bosworth
DALE N. BOSWORTH
Chief